

## Socio Economic Problems Faced By Rural Women in Getting Higher Education (A Case Study of District Karak)

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**ABSTRACT:** *The focus of the study was on the Socio Economic Problems Faced By Rural Women In Getting Higher Education. Major objectives of the research were to know about socio economic problems faced by rural women in higher education, to know about higher education as an unfocused issue in respect of rural women, and to know about gender discrimination in rural areas in getting higher education. This research was carried out in District Karak, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The purposive sampling method was used for the data collection. A sample of 80 respondents was selected including 40 parents and 40 students. Majority of the parents argued that education is obligatory for women, and most of the parents said that our education system is not that much suitable for women. Majority of the students replied that education play a vital role in the empowerment of women, and most of the students argued that they face many problems in getting higher education.*

**Keyword:** Socio Economic Problems, Rural Women, Higher Education.

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Women constitute almost half of the world population but are discriminated in various spheres of life and are more subjected to problems in many aspects because of gendered social structure (Daraz, 2012). The fact is evident that women are among the vulnerable segment in society (Bari, 2005). The importance of women's role in the process of development was recognized long ago. Women have economic, political and social roles to play. Keeping in view the importance of female education, it is believed that major cause of lagging behind in general, in economic and social progress, in most of the developing

countries, including Pakistan is the absence of a higher percentage of educated and technically qualified women (Ahmad, A. 1984).

Education empowers women to take control of their lives. It provides them with greater opportunity and choice to improve their lives and their families. Education is the key to overcome repressive customs and traditions that have negated the needs of girls and women. Education is a basic right of each individual. Provision of educational facilities to all its masses is the obligation of society in social perspective. Education is directly related to the development of the society. Education is a process through

which a nation develops its self-consciousness by developing the self-conscious of individuals who compose it. It is not a mere public instruction rather it is social institution, which provides mental, physical, ideological and moral training to the individuals of the nation so that to enable them to have full consciousness of their mission, of their purpose in the life and then to achieve that purpose (Saeed 1987).

Patriarchal values heavily govern the social structure in Pakistani society. Home has been defined as a woman's legitimate ideological and physical space where she performs her reproductive role as a mother and wife. While man dominates the world outside the home and performs his productive role as a breadwinner. Men and women are conceptually segregated into two distinct worlds. The household resources are allocated in the favour of sons (male members of the family) due to their productive role. Education for boys is prioritized vis-a-vis girls, because it is perceived that boys must be equipped with educational skills to compete for resources in public arena, while girls have to specialize in domestic skills to be good mothers and wives, hence, education is not that important for girls. This gender division of labour has been internalized by the society, and girls/women do not have many choices for themselves that could change these patriarchal realities of their lives. Society does not allow girls/women to develop their human capabilities by precluding them from acquiring higher education. Lack of emphasis on the importance of women's education is one of the cardinal features of gender inequality in Pakistan (Chaudhry 2009).

In developing countries, the females living in the rural areas are the most neglected part of the population in their schooling and higher education. Of those, who belong to peasant households have more subordinate position and are ignored towards their schooling as compared to boys ( Song, et.al 2006).

Higher education is a source of great potential for the socio economic and cultural development of the country. "The nation can be transformed into a developed nation within the life time of a single generation." Factors such as the distinctive nature of higher education institutions, international mobility of students, and teachers' accessibility of computer based learning pursuit of research and scholarship, globalization of economy, and emerging challenges of the 21st century have a direct impact on the future development of higher education (Stone, M., Horejs, J., & Lomas, A. (1997).

Education of a girl is like educating a family while educating a boy is merely educating a person. The importance of female education in a society and its spreading to all section of the life is well appreciated and documented to solve existing and emerging problems of the society. The educational backwardness of rural people is due to their traditional attitude towards female education. In rural areas number of schools are insufficient and existing school do not full fill the needs of rural females. (Asghar, S., 1992).

Socio-economic factors of family life directly and indirectly affect the education of its members. We cannot neglect any aspect as these are directly and strongly interrelated with each other. Lack of educational facilities is one of the main factors responsible for the unsatisfactory

conditions of females. Most of our girls remain illiterate due to lack of basic education and training facilities. The reason for the depressed educational status of female also lies in age, old traditions and social values of Pakistan. Females are not encouraged by their parents to seek education. They are considered suitable only for household activities. Sex differentiated rejoicing at childbirth, schooling, inheritance of property, family lineage are the common observations in both the rural and urban areas of Pakistan (Ijaz, K., 1995)

Besides, there may be certain other factors affecting education of rural females. These factors may be father's educational level, income, social class, family size and occupation. Parents can motivate and provide such an environment, which may be conducive to the achievements of particular goal. Old customs, traditions, caste system, rural community and wrongly understood religious knowledge have denied the female education (Stephen, K.H., 1993)

Pakistani women have not got the same status and position. It is due to uneven socioeconomic growth and development. The influence of feudal culture on women's education in Pakistan is high. The situation is alarming in rural areas due to social and cultural obstacles. One of the most deplorable aspects is that in some places, particularly tribal areas, the education of girls is strictly prohibited on religious grounds.

### **Objectives of the study**

The core objectives of this study enumerated as below;

1. To know about the socio economic problems faced by rural women in higher education.

2. To know that higher education is an un-focused issue in respect of rural women.

3. To know about gender discrimination in rural area in getting higher education.

## **II. THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK**

It is a matter of commonly held view that Pakistani society is a traditional one. The social and cultural context of Pakistani society is usually categorized as 'patriarchal' and is largely conservative. There is a prevalence of the culture of honour. Gender is one of the organizing principles of Pakistani society. Patriarchal values embedded in local traditions and cultures predetermine the social value of gender. An artificial divide between production and reproduction, created by the ideology of sexual division of labour, has placed women in reproductive roles as mothers and wives in the private area of home and men in a productive role as breadwinners in the public area.

Patriarchy is dominated social system in Pakistan. This system supports rigid division of labour and restricted women's freedom of movement. It strictly defines women's role in everyday jobs. Status of common woman is associated with her family and she play vitally important role in maintaining family by bearing and rearing children and caring elder family members. There is greater disparity between women and men in the field of education, employment, political participation, decision making, controlling the resources, access to health facilities and job opportunities less investment in female's education is common practice in India & Pakistan. The position of women in the family and in the society is not

considered satisfactory in the system where women are discriminated (Tisdell, C. 2002).

Financial constraint is the major problem to female higher education. The family with less income and more children prefers the education of male child and ignores the education of female child. Those who belonged to the lowest strata of social order find it difficult to invest in education especially for females. Household-income of the family affects parents' decisions to prioritize expenditures on the education of their children. "The Future of Girl's Education in Pakistan" noted that "Even if there is a minimal tuition fee charged in schools, expenditures on uniform, textbooks and other materials, besides the opportunity cost of sending daughters to school, serve as constraints. Opportunity costs increase when children grow up and become more useful in the family's income earning/domestic activities. This explains higher school drop-out rates among grown up girls. So as girls grow up they get engaged at home and withdrawn from colleges to help in domestic chores (Khalid, H.S., & Mukhtar, E.M. 2002).

Issues of safety and security of girls affect their access to higher education. Travelling long distances to attend educational institutions usually consider as threat to the personal security of girls. The incidents of girls' sexual abuse and the importance attached to the personal security of girls dominate parents' decisions of not sending girls, especially when they grow up, to educational institutions where a group of people who most likely have same cast system and have matrimonial relations within their caste is known as braderi distances are long. It shows that access to school is one of the key determinants of

enrolment in rural Punjab (Sathar, Z.A., Lloyd, C.B., & Haque, M. 2000).

Practice of early marriages seems to be another major problem to female higher education. Girls are taught not to disagree, stay modest and submissive in their behaviour. Movement of girls is usually restricted especially as they grow whereas boys are encouraged to be assertive. They are usually assigned outdoor duties. The causal explanation for this behaviour is that after marriages girls have to do domestic work and look after the in-laws, husband and children. They need to be trained in a way so that they do not face difficulties in adjusting to their married life afterwards. In Pakistani culture, marriage of girls is considered as the main responsibility of parents, and marriages within the family, caste and in the locality are the common social norms. Parents also find it difficult to go against the baraderi customs, if there is no value of female's education in their cast or baraderi. Parents of the daughters also bear the financial pressure for preparing the dowry for their daughters. These cultural practices seem to be responsible for parents' preference to investment in son's education. Parents' prefer to invest more on a son's education as if their old age social security is attached with better economic ability of their sons. This provides enough justification to invest in the education of their sons. Early marriages create problems for girls and lower down their status in terms of income, education and awareness. In South Asia, 48% (nearly 10 million) of young women are married before they age 18 (UNICEF 2005).

The most important factor is misconception that education is only for boys who go out for job while girls have to marry and look after house hold

assignments. Women in particular have limited opportunities to acquire higher education and attain professional and technical degrees. Pakistan has long been an international outlier in gender gaps in education. Girls lag behind boys in education access, in the quality of schooling available, and in the outcomes of education ( Tembon, M and Fort, L 2008).

Shortage of female teachers seems to be another major problem to female higher education especially in rural area. According to cultural norms, girl should be taught by female teachers, so when there are insufficient female teachers many parents do not enrol their daughter in colleges or universities. Rural parents strongly prefer to have girl educated by women, but the legacy of low investment in girl' education means few local women have appropriate qualification. It is also difficult to attract qualified female teacher to rural areas parts of the country (UNESCO 2009).

The importance of women's role in the process of development was recognized long ago. Women have economic, political and social roles to play. Keeping in view the importance of female education, it is believed that major cause of lagging behind in general, in economic and social progress, in most of the developing countries, including Pakistan is the absence of a higher percentage of educated and technically qualified women (Ahmad, A. 1984).

Beside these there may be more factors like father's educational level, income, social class, family size and occupation, which affect the education of daughters. There are different attitudes of parents towards the education of their daughters. The parents who are more

literate have more desire to their daughter's education. Urban people are more interested in the education of their daughter than the rural ones ( Rafiq, M., 2000).

Girls living in rural areas are encouraged not to go to school because they are needed in the home to do work at a young age. In most rural villages, secondary schooling simply does not exist for girls, leaving them no choice but to prepare for marriage and do household tasks. These rural areas often have inadequate funding and schooling for girls is at the bottom of their priorities. In developing societies like Pakistan, the role of culture in educating females is of vital importance. The socio cultural norms of the rural society of Pakistan keep the girls away from higher education (Hamid, S. 1993).

### **III. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY**

District Karak was selected as the study area. It has three Tehsils namely; Banda Daud Shah, Karak, and Takht-e-Nasrati. In non probability sampling, purposive sampling technique was used. A sample of 80 respondents was selected purposefully including 40 parents and 40 students. To ascertain the magnitude and assess the underlying factors responsible for the issue at hand and to ensure the reliability and validity of the data to a maximum level, a well thought out interview schedule was designed using Likert Scale covering almost every aspect of the issue.

Data collected from respondents was analyzed using a computer program, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, 18 Version). Collected data was transferred into the program and frequencies and percentages were made on the basis of data inserted in the database of SPSS.



#### IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

**Table: 1 Response of Parents**

	Questions	Agree	Disagree	Undecided	Total
1	Education is obligatory for women	22(55%)	13(32.5%)	5 (12.5 %)	40 (100%)
2	Women education play a vital role in the development of a country	20(50%)	20(50%)	-	40 (100%)
3	Security issue is a hindrance for women in getting/going towards higher education	12(30%)	26 (65%)	2(5%)	40 (100%)
4	women are unproductive that's why their education is not necessary	18(45%)	22(55%)	-	40 (100%)
5	Daughters are forced for early marriage	12(30%)	25(62.5%)	3(7.5%)	40 (100%)
6	daughters are meant for domestic work only	14(35%)	26 (65%)	-	40 (100%)
7	Patriarchy stop girls from going towards higher education	20(50%)	20(50%)	-	40 (100%)
8	Educated women can socialize their children well	26 (65%)	14(35%)	-	40 (100%)
9	Daughter have to leave home after marriage that's why not allowing her to get higher education	14(35%)	22(55%)	4(10%)	40 (100%)
10	Prefer religious education more as compared to modern education	18(45%)	22(55%)	-	40 (100%)

The above table shows the results of education is obligatory for women, Out of the total 40 (100%) 22(55%) respondent were of the view that education is obligatory for women and 13(32%) respondents were not agree to the former statement and remaining 5(12.5%) did not know about this statement. Same is explained by Saeed 1987. Further the finding shows that out of the total 40 (100%) 20(50%) respondent were of the view those women educations plays a vital role in the development of a country and the remaining 20(50%) respondents were not agree with former statements. Similarly Ahmad, A. (1984) also said that that woman plays a vital role in the development of country. The finding in the table also shows that that security issue is a

hindrance for women in getting towards higher education out of the total 12(30%)respondents were agreed that security issue is a hindrance for women in getting towards higher education while 26 (65%) respondents were not agree to the former statement and 2(5%) respondent were undecided. Issues of safety and security of girls affect their access to higher education (Sathar, Z.A., Lloyd, C.B., &Haque, M. 2000).Furthermore, the above table shows the results of women are considered unproductive that's why their education is not necessary, Among 40 respondents 18(45%) were agreed that women are unproductive that's why their education is not necessary while 22(55%) respondents were not agree to the former statement. Same is explained by Ijaz, K.,

(1995).The finding in the table also shows the results that Daughters are forced for early marriage, Among 40 respondents 12(30%) were agreed that forced their daughters for early marriage and 25(62.5%)respondent were disagreed and remaining 3(7.5%)respondents had no knowledge about this statement. Early marriages create problems for girls and lower down their status in terms of income, education and awareness. In South Asia, 48% (nearly 10 million) of young women are married before they age 18(UNICEF 2005).Furthermore, the above table shows the results that daughters are meant for domestic work only, Out of the total 40 (100%) 14(35%) respondents were agreed that they think that daughters are meant for domestic work only while the remaining 26 (65%) respondents denied the former statement. Similarly the table shows the result that Patriarchy stop girls going towards higher education, out of total half of respondents 20(50%) were agreed that Patriarchy stop girls going towards higher education while 20(50%) respondents were disagree with the former statement. Same is explained by Tisdell, C. (2002).Furthermore the finding in the table shows the results that

educated women can socialize their children well ,Out of the total 40 respondents 26 (65%) were agreed that educated women can socialize their children well while 14(35%) were disagreed. The above table also shows the results that Daughter have to leave home after marriage that's why they are not allowing her to get higher education, Among 40(100%) 14(35%) respondents were agreed that the daughter have to leave their home after marriage that's why they are not allowed her to get higher education while, 22(55%) respondents were not agreed with former statement and 04(10%) respondents were undecided. Similarly the above table also shows the results that they prefer religious education more as compared to modern education, So it was found that out of the total 40(100%) 18(45%) respondents were agreed that they prefer religious education more as compared to modern education while, 22(55%) respondents denied the former. Old customs, traditions, caste system, rural community and wrongly understood religious knowledge have denied the female education (Stephen, K.H., 1993).

**Table: 2 Students View Regarding Higher Education**

SR.NO.	Questions	Agree	Disagree	Undecided	Total
1	Facing any problem in getting higher education	25(62.5%)	15(37.5%)	-	40 (100%)
2	Problems faced are due to Patriarchal system	25(62.5%)	15(37.5%)	-	40 (100%)
3	Faced discrimination while getting higher education as compare to male	23(57.5%)	17(42.5%)	-	40 (100%)
4	Culture creates any hindrance while going towards higher education	15(37.5%)	25(62.5%)	-	40 (100%)
5	Considered unproductive that's why you are not allowed to go for higher education	20(50%)	20(50%)	-	40 (100%)
6	Living in a rural setup that's why not allowed to get higher	18(45%)	22(55%)	-	40 (100%)

7	personal security is one of the problem that's why not allowed to get higher education	15(37.5%)	25(62.5%)	-	40 (100%)
8	Facing financial problem that's why not allowed to get higher education	17(42.5%)	23(57.5%)	-	40 (100%)
9	Early marriage is the problem in getting higher education	20(50%)	20(50%)	-	40 (100%)
10	Status of Pakistani Society is traditional one	18(45%)	22(55%)	-	40 (100%)

The above table shows the results of the female students that they face any problem in getting higher education, among 40 respondents 25(62.5%) were agreed that they face problem in getting higher education while, 25(62.5%) respondents denied the former statement. Furthermore the finding in the above table shows that the Problems faced are due to Patriarchal system, Out of the total 40(100%) 25(62.5%) respondents were agreed that the problems they faced are due to Patriarchal system while 25(62.5%) respondents were disagreed and 5(12.5%).Same is explained by Tisdell, C. (2002).

Similarly the result in the table shows that they faced discrimination while getting higher education as compare to male it was found that out of the total 40(100%) 23(57.5%)respondents were agreed that they faced discrimination while getting higher education as compare to male while 17(42.5%)respondents were disagreed. Tembon, M and Fort, L 2008 also said that the women faced discrimination while getting higher education. Furthermore the data in the table shows that culture creates hindrance for them while going towards higher education, Among 40(100%) 15(37.5%)respondents were agreed that they believe that culture creates any hindrance for them while going towards/through higher education while 25(62.5%)respondents were

disagreed. The socio cultural norms of the rural society of Pakistan keep the girls away from higher education(Hamid, S. 1993).The table also shows the result that they are Considered unproductive that's why they are not allowed to go for higher education, Among total 40(100%) 20(50%) respondents were agreed that they think that they are considered unproductive that's why they are not allowed for getting higher education while 20(50%)respondents were disagreed, it means half of them were agreed and half were disagreed. Same is explained by Tembon, M and Fort, L (2008).Furthermore the table shows the results that they are living in a rural setup that's why they are not allowed to get higher education, that is Among 40 respondents 18(45%) were agreed they are living in a rural setup that's why they are not allowed to get higher education Otherwise if they reside in cities they would be definitely allowed for their choice of career while 22(55%) respondents were disagreed with this statement. Similarly Hamid, S. 1993 said that girls living in rural areas are encouraged not to go to school because they are needed in the home to do work at a young age. In most rural villages, secondary schooling simply does not exist for girls, leaving them no choice but to prepare for marriage and do household tasks. Similarly the table also shows the results that personal



security is one of the problem that's why they are not allowed to get higher education, that is among 40(100%) 15(37.5%) respondents were agreed that personal security is one of the problem that's why they are not allowed to get higher education and the remaining 25(62.5%) respondents were disagreed. Issues of safety and security of girls affect their access to higher education Sathar, Z.A., Lloyd, C.B., & Haque, M. (2000). The above table also shows that they face a financial problem that's why they are not allowed to get higher education, that is out of the total 40(100%) 17(42.5%) respondents were agreed that they face a financial problem that's why they are not allowed to get higher education and 23 (57.5%) respondents were disagreed with this statement. Financial constraint is the major problem to female higher education (Khalid, H.S., & Mukhtar, E.M. (2002). Furthermore the table also shows that early marriage is the problem in getting higher education that is Among 40(100%) 20(50%) respondents were agreed that early marriage is the problem in getting higher education while 20(50%) respondents were disagreed. Similarly the table further shows that Pakistani society is traditional that's why they are not allowed to get higher education that is out of the total 40(100%) 18(45%) respondents were agreed that Pakistani society is traditional that's why they are not allowed to get higher education while 22(55%) respondents were disagreed. Old customs, traditions, caste system, rural community and wrongly understood religious knowledge have denied the female education (Stephen, K.H., 1993).

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